

USNORTHCOM recalls past, keeps focus on future

Press Release

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PETERSON AIR FORCE BASE, Colo. ? Look on the past with pride, but never forget there is still work to be done.

This was the message U.S. Northern Command Deputy Commander Lt. Gen. Joseph Inge had for the men and women of his command Sept. 30 during its third anniversary celebration.

?I'd be remiss if I didn't thank every one of you for the work you've done over the last years, but certainly over the last month [in support of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita],? Inge said. ?Be proud of what you've done, be grateful for what you've done, but remember, there's [still] work to be done.?

U.S. Northern Command was created in the wake of the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks to serve as the Department of Defense's lead for homeland defense and defense support to civil authorities.

?We're an operating place,? Inge said, ?and we will continue in that vein. We will continue to serve our countries and its citizens.?

Since its inception Oct. 1, 2002, USNORTHCOM's mission is to deter, prevent and defeat threats and aggression aimed at the United States and its interests within its assigned area of responsibility – generally the North American continent and maritime approaches out to approximately 500 nautical miles from the coastline. Additionally, USNORTHCOM provides assistance to a primary federal agency responding to an emergency situation that exceeds the capabilities of local, state and federal agencies to help mitigate disasters and their after-effects.

In just three years, USNORTHCOM has been called on to play a vital role in defending the homeland through operations such as Noble Eagle and provide defense support to civil authorities in situations such as Hurricanes Katrina and Rita.

In addition to these requests, the command refines its skills and builds interagency relationships through its rigorous training and exercise program, which includes at least two major exercises each year based on simultaneous terrorist attack and natural disaster scenarios.

?The nation needs us,? Inge said. ?We live in times of trouble where our adversaries have not gone away and we remain one of our nation's lines of defense.?

Supporting civilian agencies, like most recently the Federal Emergency Management Agency in Hurricane Katrina and Rita relief efforts, in no way detracts from the command's number one job, assures USNORTHCOM Commander Adm. Timothy J.



USNORTHCOM Deputy Commander Army Lt. Gen. Joseph Inge and Air Force Senior Airman Andrew Roberts, 22, the youngest military member assigned to the command, cut the ceremonial caked during the command's third anniversary celebration Sept. 30. Photo credit: Petty Officer 1st Class Shane Wallenda

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Keating.

"Northern Command's primary mission is homeland defense, and our vigilance in that regard is unwavering," said Keating. As always, "we are watching our ports, our skies [and] our borders."